

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

**Gregarious behaviour of *Elampus panzeri* (Fabricius) (Hymenoptera: Chrysididae).**—In a previous note in this journal, Jones (1988) described a mass emergence and apparent 'perching' behaviour of this cuckoo wasp (cited by him under its synonym *Notozus panzeri*) in a West Sussex locality. M. Edwards and myself had a very similar experience late on the afternoon of 3.vii.83 on Morden Bog NNR, Dorset. Casual sweeping of short, sparse, heather (*Calluna vulgaris* L.) along a few metres of sandy path traversing the heathland produced scores of *E. panzeri*. A closer examination revealed hundreds, if not thousands of individuals of this species perching on the sprays of heather and adjacent plants, the vegetation glistening and shimmering in the sunlight from the effect of so many of these colourful insects. Others were flying low over the same plants, apparently moving into and assembling in the area. Subsequent study and dissection of a sample collected at this site, revealed these to be males, from which it was concluded that the majority of those encountered in the field were probably of this sex. The reason for such unusual, gregarious, behaviour can only be guessed; perhaps these specimens were attracted to a nesting site of one of their sphecid wasp hosts (red-bodied *Psen* species), from which female *E. panzeri* were emerging.—George R. Else, Northcroft, St Peter's Road, Hayling Island, Portsmouth, Hants PO11 0RX.

## REFERENCES

- Jones R. A. 1988. Mass emergence and apparent 'perching' behaviour of *Notozus panzeri* (F.) (Hymenoptera: Chrysididae). *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.* 1: 189–190.

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**A nocturnal beetle active in bright sunlight.**—*Orectochilus villosus* (Muller, O. F.) is usually regarded as being nocturnal and is widely reported as such in the literature. I was more than a little surprised, therefore, to find it abundant and active in bright sunshine recently.

On 30.vii.89, heavy rain at Eridge in East Sussex finally stopped and by 12 noon the clouds had given way to bright sunshine. By a bridge over a small stream—the perfect spot for lunch—my father A. W. Jones suggested that I discard my still sodden sweep net and instead try and catch a whirligig.

Whirling about on the flowing water were several dozen gyrimids, and a couple of stabs with the water net secured one—immediately identifiable as *Orectochilus*. After capturing several more, it was obvious that this was the only species present.

Although the stream emerged from deep shade cast by trees, it was only beside the bridge, in full sunlight that the beetles appeared to be active, dashing around from stone to stone and even attacking a struggling spider as it was swept gently by.

Apart from Balfour-Browne (1950) who also found it active one day in West Mayo in 1909, I can find no report of day-time activity in this species.

At about 3.00 p.m. we again passed the bridge; and although the sun was still out, the beetles were not.—Richard A. Jones, 13 Bellwood Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3DE.

## REFERENCE

- Balfour-Browne, F. 1950. *British water beetles*, volume 3, page 368. London: Ray Society.